

Storm Watch

How to prepare your family and property for severe weather

Outside

1. Trim dead or weak branches from surrounding trees. Do not leave them for curbside pickup during a storm watch.
2. Moor boat securely, store it upside down against a wall or move it to a safer place. Remove canvas. Anchor a boat trailer with strong rope.
3. Protect your windows with custom-fit shutters or 5/8-inch plywood. Check with your local building inspector.
4. Keep roof drains clear.
5. If you live in a flood-prone area, elevate or move structures to higher ground.
6. Bring indoors objects that may be blown or swept away, such as lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines and hanging plants.
7. Lower water level in pool 6 inches. Add extra chlorine. Turn off electricity to pool equipment and wrap up any exposed filter pumps with a waterproof covering.
8. Plan how to take care of your pets. Leave them with a friend. If you must evacuate, it is best to take your pets with you, but most shelters will not allow them. Large animals in barns should have plenty of food and water.

9. If a storm is pending, fuel your vehicle.
10. Keep a smaller Disaster Supplies Kit (see next page) in the trunk of each car.
11. Keep sliding glass doors wedged shut in high wind.
12. If you use a portable generator, make sure you know what loads it can handle, including start-up wattage. If you connect the generator to household circuit, you must have a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch installed between the generator and outside power, or the "back-feed" could seriously harm or kill utility line workers.
13. Take down outdoor antennas, after unplugging televisions.

Inside

14. Store valuables in a waterproof container at the highest point in your home.
15. Make two photocopies of vital documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box. Keep one copy in a safe place in the house, and give the second copy to someone out-of-town. Vital documents include birth and marriage certificates, tax records, credit card numbers, financial records, wills and trusts.
16. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. Use the test button to test them once a month. Replace batteries at least once a year.
17. If a family member relies on life-support equipment, make sure your electric cooperative knows ahead of time.
18. Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.
19. Pick a "safe" room in the house, usually a first-floor interior hallway, room or closet without windows.

Resource information

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
500 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20472
Phone: (800) 480-2520
www.fema.gov

American Red Cross
Attn: Public Inquiry Office
431 18th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone: (202) 639-3520
www.redcross.org

20. Plan home escape routes. Find two ways out of each room.
21. Check and protect objects that could cause harm during a bad storm: bookshelf, hanging pictures, gas appliances, chemicals.
22. Write and videotape an inventory of your home, garage, and surrounding property. Include information such as serial numbers, make and model numbers, physical descriptions, and price of purchases (receipts, if possible). Store a copy somewhere away from home, such as in a safe deposit box.
23. Keep a portable, battery-operated radio or television and extra batteries.
24. Post emergency telephone numbers.
25. Show adult family members where your fire extinguishers are and how they work.
26. Make a plan for family members to reunite if separated (if children are at school and adults are at work). Designate an out-of-state relative or friend as a contact person and make sure everybody in the family knows how to reach the person.
27. Teach all responsible family members how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches or valves. Keep a wrench near gas and water shut-off valves. Turn off utilities only if you suspect a leak or damaged lines, or if you are instructed to do so by authorities.

A Disaster Supply Kit (recommended by the American Red Cross)

Have enough disaster supplies for 2 weeks ready. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Replace stored food and water every six months. Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year. (Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.) Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

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| Emergency food & drinking water | Lantern with extra fuel |
| At least one change of clothes | Manual can opener |
| Baby food, diapers & formula | Matches |
| Batteries | Medicines, glasses or contact lens supplies |
| Bleach (without lemon or additives) | Mosquito repellent |
| Books, magazines, cards & games | Personal identification |
| Butane lighters | Pet food |
| Cash & credit cards | Phone numbers of places you could go. |
| Camera & film | Plastic trash bags |
| Car keys | Radio (battery-operated) or TV |
| Charcoal & lighter fluid | Rope (100 ft.) |
| Clock (non-electric) | Sleeping bags, pillows & blankets |
| Cooler (with ice) | Soap & shampoo |
| Duct & masking tape | Sturdy shoes |
| Extension cords | Toilet paper & towels |
| Fire extinguisher | Tool kit including hammer, crowbar, nails, saw, gloves, etc. |
| First Aid kit | Water purification tablets |
| Flashlight | |
| Grill or camp stove | |
| Heavy plastic (for roof if damaged) | |

If you must evacuate

leave as quickly as possible. Unplug your appliances, but leave on your refrigerator. Turn off the main water valve. If time allows, move furniture to a higher place. Take sleeping bags, blankets, warm protective clothing, emergency supplies, eating utensils and identification showing proof of residency. Tell somebody where you are going.

